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## CHAPTER 3

### **Multilevel party politics of immigration: territorial rescaling and party competition**

Eve Hepburn

#### **[A] Introduction**

Immigration is one of the most pressing concerns in Western democracies, becoming a key source of polarization amongst publics and political parties (Boswell, 2003; Odmalm, 2012). However, while the integration of immigrants is increasingly managed by substate government levels as demonstrated by Ricard Zapata-Barrero and Fiona Barker in chapter 2, thereby becoming an important issue in the agendas of substate territorial actors as we shall see below, studies of immigration have focussed almost exclusively on the central or national(-state) level. This represents a significant gap in our understanding of the party politics of immigration in multilevel states. States are no longer (if they ever were) homogenous political entities with the same statewide parties competing over the same statewide policy issues across the entire space of a given country. Instead, we have witnessed a dramatic decentralization of powers to substate territories, which have enabled regional political actors to advance distinct policy agendas to cater for regional interests, leading to policy divergence across states (Loughlin, 2001; Keating, 2001). This has been described as spatial or territorial ‘rescaling’, whereby power and authority is dispersed across several territorial levels within states (Keating 2009). In response, political parties have themselves undergone degrees of territorial rescaling, by transforming themselves

from unitary organizations to decentralized multilevel beasts (Deschouwer, 2003; Hopkin, 2003; Bradbury and Mitchell, 2006; Thorlakson, 2006; Fabre, 2008; Detterbeck and Hepburn, 2010). As a result, substate regional branches are allowed to fashion their own policy programmes and campaigns in order to cater to the interests of the regional citizenry, and to compete with home-grown regional parties which may advocate greater self-determination for the territory. Often, this requires parting from central-party policy to develop more appropriate policies for the region. Therefore, in similarity to the levels of government themselves, as Zapata-Barrero and Barker have shown us, different levels of political parties may also adopt more synchronized or combative/divergent positions on immigration policy matters.

The territorial rescaling of states has led to increasing policy differentiation and divergence across states, as regions seek tailored policy solutions to regional problems (Keating, 2009). Yet so far, studies have focussed on traditional social policy issues such as childcare, health, or education, whereby regional parties have ‘broken’ from central-party agendas to meet the specific socioeconomic and cultural needs of the substate region. However, immigration represents another key policy issue that has become decentralized in certain states – especially in relation to migrant integration – leading to possibilities of regional policy divergence. Furthermore, immigration has become a source of competition between political parties at the substate regional level, and to that end it deserves attention. Focus on the multilevel party politics of immigration has been generally lacking from the literature (see Zapata-Barrero, 2009a; Hepburn, 2009b), and the aim of this chapter is to begin a discourse that seeks to redress this imbalance.

One primary explanation for this lack of attention to substate-state party dynamics – not only in immigration matters but also in other policy areas – is that the

dynamics of regional party systems are often distinct from state-level party systems. In particular, regional party systems are often influenced by a ‘territorial cleavage’, which in some cases takes prominence over the left-right dimension (Hepburn, 2010). This cleavage revolves around three issues of territorial concern:

(1) the politics of territory, that is, issues of political autonomy, self-determination and representation within state structures (here, parties often take positions along an independence—unitarism continuum);

(2) the culture of territory, such as issues of language, identity and culture (here, the main polarizing issue tends to be language, whereby, in the case of the existence of a regional minority language, parties take positions along a unilingualism—bilingualism continuum); and

(3) the economics of territory, whereby parties may support increasing subsidies from the state or increased economic autonomy (thereby taking positions along an economic dependence—autonomy continuum).

These three dimensions of ‘territorial interests’ interact with issues of immigration and demographic change in particular ways at the substate regional level that diverge from state-level norms. Regarding the territorial politics of immigration, regional parties may welcome immigrants into the ranks of the substate region (which may also constitute a stateless nation) to bolster the ranks of territory and thereby demands for more self-determination, or alternatively, they may perceive immigrants as political agents of the centre, tend to weaken demands for self-government or

independence (Hepburn, 2009b; Banting and Soroka, 2011). On territorial cultural interests, regional parties may view immigrants as a threat to the culture and traditional way of life of the region/nation. In particular, when the region has its own language, immigration can be seen as ‘diluting’ the linguistic ranks of the territory. This is especially true if the language is perceived to be ‘threatened’ by the expansion of the dominant national (statewide) language (Kymlicka, 2001; Zapata-Barrera, 2007). Alternatively, parties may view immigrants as enriching the culture of the substate region or stateless nation if they endorse a multicultural vision of society. Finally, on the issues of territorial economic interests, regional parties may view immigration as a way to bolster the regional economy by filling particular skills gaps in the labour force, or alternatively, they may perceive immigrants as taking jobs from the locals (see Dustmann, 2003).

Yet the effects of territory are not only restricted to the regional level. Various dimensions of the territorial cleavage (political, economic, cultural) may also become key issues within the *statewide* party system. This may occur when a statewide party that has a strongly concentrated support base in a particular region, seeks to highlight the problems of that region by placing it on the national political agenda. Perhaps more common is when a stateless nationalist or regionalist party (SNRP) advances its territorial claims within the statewide electoral arena. In short, both statewide parties and regional parties may develop strategies at multiple levels – regional, state and (beyond the scope of this collection), Europe – to address issues of territory. And these territorial issues interact with immigration in several ways. At the statewide level, parties must account for the uneven settlement and impact of migrants across different parts of the country: i.e. migrants tend to settle in urban rather than rural regions. As a result, migrant integration takes different forms in different places,

which parties must address. The decentralization of party structures also enables regional branches of parties to approach immigration in distinctive ways, which may involve developing a custom-made regional approach to migrant integration. This may be especially important if the region also considers itself to form a ‘nation’ with a claim to distinctiveness. In this case, regional elites may be preoccupied with promoting a distinctive nation-building project and conception of citizenship that diverges from, or even conflict with, the state-building project.

This chapter seeks to develop an explanatory framework for understanding multilevel party competition on immigration issues. It begins by considering the general trend towards territorial rescaling, and the effect of this on parties and party systems. It then goes on to examine classical theories of party competition, in particular the spatial and ownership theories, before examining two issues that do not conform to left-right ideological polarization: territory and immigration. The chapter then examines how the issues of immigration and territory interact in multilevel party systems, with a particular focus on the neglected regional level. Following this, the chapter explores how parties – including statewide parties (and their regional branches), and stateless nationalist and regionalist parties (SNRPs) – have adopted distinctive stances on immigration at different levels, which are often influenced by their positions on the territorial cleavage. This final section puts forward several possible explanatory factors, which are then tested in the case studies, for why political parties adopt different positions on immigration at different territorial levels; in particular, why regional party stances may differ from statewide party responses.

## **[A] Theories of Party Competition**

Immigration has become a key source of political conflict in Western democracies (Boswell, 2003; Lahav, 2004; Koopmans, et al 2005; Odmalm, 2012). However, there is still a shortage of comparative research on the salience of immigration in the policy agendas of political parties, which is still generally perceived as a ‘niche’ issue (see Meguid, 2008; Alonso and da Fonseca, 2012). Furthermore, there is a dearth of research on how political parties at the regional level compete on immigration. Most approaches to party competition still tend towards a ‘state-centric’ bias, emphasising ideology as the critical axis upon which parties compete.

Political parties are commonly classified and differentiated from one another by their location on a left-to-right spectrum, conventionally ranging from Marxism at the extreme Left, with Fascism at the extreme Right. In the late 1950s, Downs (1957) developed a ‘proximity theory’ of party competition. He argued that parties compete by taking diverging positions along a set of issue dimensions, based on the assumption that voters will support a party whose position on an issue most closely resembles their own. More specifically, they will ‘strive to distinguish themselves ideologically from each other and maintain the purity of their positions’ (Downs 1957: 126-7). This is more likely in proportional electoral systems than majoritarian systems, whereby the greater number of parties in the PR system encourages parties to distinguish themselves more clearly, and possibly more radically, on policy ground.

Building upon Downs’ analysis, Sartori (1976) argued that party competition arises from the extent to which parties differ on ideological grounds, i.e. the existence of ‘left-right polarization’. This means that party systems, which are understood as ‘the system of interactions resulting from interparty competition’ (Sartori 1976: 44), can be categorized by the number of ideological ‘poles’ upon which parties pivot, and the ‘distance’ between parties on a left-right continuum. Party systems are ‘bipolar’ if

there are two ideological poles around which parties obtain support, and ‘multi-polar’ if support pivots along various points along a left-right continuum. Other scholars, however, have argued that there are dimensions other than ideology which are important in party competition, such as issues relating to gender, race, sexual orientation, Europe, immigration and the environment. Yet even then, ideology is still seen as a ‘multiple-ordering dimension’ under which other issues are accommodated (Maor and Smith, 1993). Other scholars contend that the salience of a given issue may be just as important as the ideological distance between parties in determining the way they compete. Budge and Farlie (1983) argue that parties seek to make their concerns most prominent in campaigns, rather than emphasising how their position on an issue is distinguishable from other party positions. In ‘owning’ certain issues, parties will attract those voters who are concerned with this issue (so left-wing parties emphasize social welfare whilst right-wing parties are seen to ‘own’ the issue of law-and-order). However, the ‘ownership’ approach, as conceptualized by Budge and Farlie and focussed exclusively on socioeconomic matters, is unable to account for issues that are not associated with a particular left-right ideology.

Territory is one such ‘issue’, whereby constitutional change or the defence of territorial interests may be pursued by any or all of the main ‘class-based’ parties, as well as regionalist and green parties (Hepburn, 2010; Alonso, 2012). A growing body of literature in nationalism and regionalism studies has shown that political activity often pivots around issues of culture, language, boundaries and self-determination (Lynch 1996; De Winter and Tursan 1998; Jones and Keating 1995; Keating 2001). The territorial heterogeneity of states, according to Lipset and Rokkan (1967) is a result of territorial cleavage ‘structures’ and different patterns of political conflict in different places. These territorial cleavages have never gone away, despite the



modernizing and centralizing impulses of modern nation-states. Indeed, some scholars have argued that the territorial cleavage is now experiencing a renaissance as states decentralize (Hough and Jeffery 2006; Swenden and Maddens 2008; Hepburn 2010). This has led political parties to take greater account of issues of territory in their political agendas, encouraging them to contest the ‘ownership’ of the territorial dimension (alongside other left-right dimensions) in multilevel states (Alonso, 2012).

In particular, a certain type of political party – the stateless nationalist or regionalist party (SNRP) – has made the issue of territory its *pièce de résistance* (Hepburn, 2009a). These parties have been defined as ‘geographically concentrated peripheral minorities which challenge the working order and sometimes the democratic order of a nation-state by demanding recognition’ (Muller-Rommel, 1998). The defining characteristic of these parties is the demand for territorial empowerment, which often includes the goal of self-determination (De Winter and Türsan, 1998; Hepburn, 2009a). In particular, SNRPs are distinguished by three characteristics: (1) they are organized within a given territory; (2) they seek to represent a population which shares a common identity; (3) their strategies aim to secure territorial self-determination (de Prat 2002). Importantly, SNRPs span a range of ideological positions, including the extreme left (Scottish Socialist Party), the centre left (Eusko Alkartasuna), the centre right (Convergencia i Unio), and extreme right (Vlaams Belang). Indeed, some scholars have argued that SNRPs are the only party family in Europe that is located across the entire left–right dimension (Tronconi, 2005; Gomez-Reino, 2008; Hepburn, 2009a).

Immigration is another such ‘issue’ that is not associated exclusively with a particular ideology. As Odmalm (2012: 1) argues, ‘immigration “messes” up party classification...Parties that are supposed to be on the ‘Right’ are suddenly on the

‘Left’ (and vice versa) once immigration is taken into account.’ Although early research made a connection between immigration and far-right populist parties, which campaigned primarily on an anti-immigrant platform, several recent studies have shown that immigration has become a concern of all mainstream parties (Mudde, 2007; Davis, 2012; Odmalm, 2012). For instance, Van Spanje (2010) identified a ‘contagion effect’ of anti-immigrant parties, whose electoral success influences other parties’ policy positions on immigration. In an analysis of 75 parties within eleven West European states, he found that the policies of left-wing parties were as influenced by anti-immigrant parties as right-wing parties. As such, he posits that anti-immigrant parties have a contagion effect on entire party systems (Van Spanje 2010). Alonso and Da Fonseca (2012) have shown that the immigration issue has gained saliency in the agendas of both centre-right and centre-left parties, so that the positions of both have been converging in an anti-immigrant direction in the face of electorally successful far-right parties. Further research has shown that the adoption of anti-immigrant positions by the mainstream parties has, in turn, facilitated anti-immigrant success. Dahlström and Sundell (2012) demonstrate that mainstream parties legitimize anti-immigrant parties by taking a tougher position on immigration. Clearly, immigration has become a key concern across the party system in Western states, not only influencing the rise of far-right parties, but also affecting the policy agendas of mainstream left and right parties.

However, while these developments can be identified at the state level, might one discover a rather different set of findings when examining the effects of immigration on substate party systems? The following section will explore how the twin issues of territory and immigration may produce a different set of outcomes at the substate level, as opposed to the state level.

## **[A] Immigration, Regions and Territorial Interests**

The trend towards regionalization and federalism within many states means that substate electoral arenas have become important focal points for territorial interest representation (Jeffery 1997; Hough and Jeffery 2006; Marks et al 2008; Keating 2009). Decentralization has led to the creation of regional executives and parliaments, regional policy communities and regional electoral arenas. In long-standing federal states such as Austria, Canada and Germany, as well as newly decentralising or federalising states in the UK, Spain, Italy and Belgium, substate tiers of government have accumulated extensive executive, legislative and fiscal powers that lie outside the control of the state. This has resulted in the empowerment of the regional level, and the development of regionally specific policies to address regional concerns.

As a result of territorial rescaling, immigration has become not only an important issue and policy competence at the state level; it has also become key concern for substate regions, some of which are steadily gaining increased powers over immigration policy. However, the substate regional level has so far been virtually absent in the field of immigration studies, despite the fact that it is increasingly responsible for the social, economic and cultural integration of immigrants (see Joppke and Seidle, 2012). Where there has been research done on party competition on immigration, scholars have focussed exclusively on the state level (Meguid 2008; Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008; Alonso and da Fonseca 2012; Odmalm, 2012; Davis 2012). Party competition at multiple territorial levels of a state is a field of research that has barely been touched by scholarship. Yet the trend towards decentralization and federalism within OECD states means that substate assemblies have been empowered with control over large sections of social,

environmental and economic policy, including health, education, housing, culture, the environment, planning and economic development (Keating, 2001; Loughlin, 2001; Marks et al 2008). These policy areas ‘overlap’ with immigration, which tends to be controlled by the ‘centre’ – that is, the state government. They overlap because immigration affects the substate region’s demographic growth, labour market, economic development and the delivery of public services (such as schooling, health and social care, and housing). Furthermore, as the case-studies in Part II of this volume demonstrate, some substate regions have also been allocated direct competences for immigrant integration. As such, and as the case-studies in Part III show, regional parties have increasingly taken a stance on immigration issues, despite this being a policy area traditionally determined by the centre (Hepburn, 2009b).

The way in which territory influences party positioning on immigration becomes all the more heightened in states of a multinational (or ‘plurinational’) nature, which may or may not contain stateless nationalist and regionalist parties (SNRPs). Most debates on immigration assume ‘that the receiving society and the receiving state coincide’ (Zapata-Barrero, 2007:3). However, this is certainly not the case in multinational states, in which one or more stateless nations, with their own language, culture and political identity, exist within the shell of the state. For Banting and Soroka (2012: 157), ‘the existence of multiple and potentially competing political identities can complicate the integration process. This is particularly the case if the central state and the substate nation promote different conceptions of citizenship and different nation-building projects – in effect, competing for the affections of newcomers’.

Furthermore, immigration presents particular challenges for stateless nations within multinational states that have distinct political identities and cultures as

Zapata-Barrero and Barker made clear in chapter 2 (see also Kymlicka, 2011). According to Banting and Soroka (2012: 157) ‘immigration into the homeland of national minorities such as Quebec, Flanders or Catalonia can ... generate added tensions. Such immigration has the potential to dilute the culture of the national minority, affect the prospects for nationalist mobilization, and upset historic balances between the substate nation and the majority in the country as a whole’.

Finally, stateless nations may use their devolved powers not only to also to assert their autonomy vis-a-vis the central government, but also to highlight their ‘distinct society’ claims by defining their own conditions for immigrant integration. This may include special conditions for access to permanent residence or citizenship (which may be more restrictive or more liberal than that at the state level).

#### **[A] Immigration and Parties in Multilevel States**

So how have political parties operating within multilevel states responded to the issue of immigration, and to what extent has it become entwined with issues of territory? Have regional immigration concerns influenced statewide-level debates? And have statewide immigration concerns influenced regional-level debates? Indeed, has immigration become an important point of competition, or even polarization, between substate parties at all – be they nationalist, regionalist, conservative, socialist, liberal or green? Finally, to what extent (if at all) have SNRPs and regional branches of statewide parties differed from central parties in their approach to immigration?

Most obviously, the issue of immigration integration is a fundamental concern to stateless nationalist and regionalist parties (SNRPs). As we saw above, SNRPs are primarily focussed on the goals of territorial empowerment, which includes seeking to protect or maintain the identity, culture and interests of the regional population, and to

obtain greater autonomy for the region based on its (cultural, linguistic, historical, and political) distinctiveness – a priority that distinguishes them from statewide parties (for a fuller description of SNRPs see Hepburn, 2009a). As such, immigration poses a particular challenge for SNRPs to include ‘non-nationals’ in their region- or nation-building projects. In particular, immigration may be perceived by SNRPs as posing distinct challenges for preserving regional identities, cultures and languages. Traditionally, SNRPs have sought to defend these territorial interests from encroachment by the ‘centre’, that is the majority population of the state. Immigrants, in opting to integrate into the majority culture by learning the majority language, for instance, may be included in the perceived threat of the centre by SNRP (Zapata-Barrero, 2007). However, if immigrants choose (or are required) to integrate into the minority culture and learn the minority language of the region, then SNRPs would presumably view immigrants in a more positive light as the ranks of the minority region have been augmented. SNRPs have also been among the greatest critics of statewide immigration policies and advocates of greater regional control of immigration policy. To that end, SNRPs have often taken their demands to the statewide level, arguing for a decentralization of state immigration systems.

Yet immigration has also become an important policy issue for regional branches of statewide parties, which must respond to the immigration concerns of SNRPs while at the same time maintaining a coherent immigration policy across different levels of the multilevel state. As noted above, one important characteristic of substate party systems is that statewide parties must operate in a peculiarly regional context, and compete on regional issues. This has led to intra-party demands for the organizational decentralization of political parties (Detterbeck and Renzsch, 2003; Fabre, 2008; Wilson, 2009; Detterbeck and Hepburn, 2010). Furthermore, it has been

well-documented that political parties operating at the substate regional level often diverge in their policy agendas from parties at the nation-state level on issues such as education, healthcare and immigration (Bradbury and Mitchell, 2001).

Importantly, the decentralization of political parties may lead to intra-party conflict as different levels of parties diverge in the areas of policy, campaigning, and their activities in public office. For instance, the Quebec Liberal Party, Catalan Socialist Party and Scottish Labour Party have all – to varying extents – sought to distinguish (or even separate) themselves from their statewide counterparts over contested policy issues, including multiculturalism and social policy. Furthermore, in cases where statewide parties must compete with SNRPs – such as Flanders, Catalonia, Quebec, Scotland, and Northern Italy – regional branches have sometimes adopted stronger territorial positions, including support for greater autonomy, to defuse support for secession as well as to exert greater control issues that strongly affect regional populations such as immigration (Fabre, 2008; Hepburn, 2010, 2011). In particular, if immigration becomes a key concern of SNRPs in their development of a nation-building project, then it must also become a concern of regional branches of statewide parties. This is because they too need to be seen as representing ‘territorial interests’ and defending the interests and identity of the territory (from potential external threats) (Hepburn, 2009a). Furthermore, regional party positioning on territorial issues may be motivated by attempts to align the party with public opinion (i.e. support for greater self-determination for the region). However, it may also demonstrate a ‘gap’ with public opinion on issues they consider to be best decided at the elite level (and here, the positions of party leaders on immigration often diverge from those of party followers – on the Spanish case, see Zapata-Barrero, 2009b).

Of course, there is no straightforward correlation between territory and immigration in determining party competition, as there is no straightforward correlation between ideology and immigration (Odmalm, 2012) or territory and ideology (Hepburn, 2009a). SNRPs and regional branches of statewide parties have responded in various ways to the challenges and opportunities associated with immigration. ‘Whilst some parties have welcomed immigration as a way of boosting their economies and expanding and diversifying national membership, other parties have rejected immigration as a threat to the labour market, and argue that it will undermine and fragment the national community’ (Hepburn, 2009b). There is a need, therefore, to examine the positions of SNRPs and regional branches of statewide parties on immigration, and to explore to what extent they are distinctive from the positions of national-level parties, and why. As this discussion has sought to demonstrate so far, the context in which regional parties compete on immigration may be very different from that of the statewide level. This is because, as we saw above, the dynamics of regional party systems are often distinct from those of statewide party systems, due to the distinctive nature of the regional political culture and economy. In particular, regional party systems may be strongly influenced by a territorial cleavage, with parties taking distinct positions on self-determination, the protection of cultural identities, languages, and traditional economies. This would lead us to assume that regional parties might adopt quite different positions on immigration from statewide parties in multilevel states.

#### **[A] Identifying Explanatory Factors for Regional/Statewide Positions on Immigration**



The following section seeks to provide an explanatory framework for understanding the positioning of regional and statewide parties on immigration, and for identifying potential areas of divergence between the two. It develops several hypotheses to account for the immigration stances of national parties operating in statewide systems on one hand, and SNRPs and regional branches of statewide parties operating at the substate level on the other. These factors are: (1) demographic issues; (2) economic issues; (3) linguistic/cultural issues; (4) party ideology; (5) electoral system; (6) party polarization; and (7) the relative degree of government control over immigration policy. This list is certainly not exhaustive and there may be other specific factors that account for party positioning on immigration in particular countries. Instead, it seeks to identify general factors that explain the positioning of parties within multilevel states. Furthermore, not all of these variables may be applicable for one case; instead, it is anticipated that there may only be one or two (clusters of) explanations for party positioning on immigration at a particular time in a particular case.

#### *[B] 1. Demography*

A first factor that could account for divergence between statewide and regional party positions on immigration relates to the overall demographic situation of the state in question, and the specific demographic position of the region within that state. Demographic status includes: current levels of immigration to the state/region, the direction of migratory trends, and the (forecasted) stability of the state/regional population. On the first matter, if a state has received high overall levels of immigrants, then it is more likely that statewide parties adopt more restrictive stances on immigration; alternatively, in cases where a state has received low numbers of immigrants, parties are likely to have a more positive approach based on a greater

need to attract and/or retain skilled immigrants. Regional parties are likely to adopt similar positions to statewide parties unless (1) the region has received significantly higher levels of immigration compared to the national average, in which case regional parties are more likely to advocate less immigration than statewide parties; or (2) the region has received lower levels of immigration compared to the national average, in which case regional parties will take more pro-immigration stances than statewide parties. On the second issue, in states that are net importers of immigrants, statewide parties are likely to have more restrictive stances than states that have high levels of out-migration, as population decline may be a concern in the second scenario. Similarly, regional parties may adopt more restrictive/open positions on immigration based on the in-migration and out-migration of the region. Linked to that, parties are more likely to adopt positive approaches towards immigration if long-term demographic decline (owing to low fertility rates or an ageing population) are forecast for states; in contrast, states that have flourishing demographic rates are more likely to incite positions from statewide parties that the territory is ‘full up’ and requires no further immigration. Again, regional parties are likely to adopt similar positions unless the region faces long-term demographic decline compared to the national average, in which case regional parties may take more positive positions than statewide parties. On the basis of this analysis, we can hypothesize that:

*H1.1 Immigration is viewed positively by statewide parties if there are low levels of immigration and demographic decline; and negatively if there are high levels of immigration and robust demographic levels.*

*H1.2 Immigration is viewed positively by regional parties if there are low levels of immigration to the region and demographic decline compared to the national average; and negatively if the region received significantly high levels of immigration on top of already robust demographic levels.*

*[B] 2. Economy*

A second potential explanatory variable for statewide and regional party positioning on immigration is economic. To put it simply, in poorer states that have a skills shortage in the labour market, statewide parties are more likely to support increased immigration, in particular targeting migrants that possess certain labour-market skills that are required by the national economy to sustain economic growth. In contrast, wealthy states that are performing well and have no labour shortages are unlikely to demand increased immigration. Regional parties are likely to adopt similar positions to statewide parties unless (1) the regional economy is much weaker than the national economy as a whole and there is a significant labour shortage, encouraging parties to view immigration as necessary to boost growth; or (2) the regional economy is much stronger than the national economy as a whole, causing regional parties to see no need for further immigration. Based on this, we can hypothesize that:

*H2.1 Immigration is viewed positively by statewide parties if the national economy is in decline and there a labour shortage; and negatively if the national economy is flourishing and there is no labour shortage*

*H2.2 Immigration is viewed positively by regional parties if the regional economy is underperforming compared to the national average and there is a*

*significant labour shortage; and negatively if the regional economy is outperforming the national economy and there is seen to be no regional labour shortage.*

*[B] 3. Linguistic and Cultural Barriers*

Third, language and culture – and the extent to which they present ‘barriers’ to migrant integration – may be an important determinant of statewide and regional parties’ positions on immigration. In particular, statewide parties may be opposed to immigration if the current immigrant population has been shown to have had difficulties learning the national language. Similarly, linguistic proficiency in the minority language of the region is also a key barrier for becoming a citizen of the region, in cases where the language of the region differs from the language of the state (i.e. French in Quebec, English in the rest of Canada; Catalan or Basque versus Castilian in the rest of Spain). Regional parties may therefore oppose immigration if they believe it would reduce the size of the regional population who speak the minority language, whereby minority-language speakers would be threatened or ‘submerged’ within the state. This may happen in cases whereby immigrants choose to adopt the language of the majority (rather than the minority) for reasons of social mobility. In contrast, regional parties are more likely to welcome immigrants if (1) they are already fluent in the minority language or willing to learn it; or (2) if there are strong immigration requirements/education policies in place for the region, which encourages migrants to integrate into the culture, language and identity of the region.

*H3.1 Immigration is viewed positively by statewide parties if immigrants share and/or learn the national language; and negatively if immigrants are shown to have difficulties/opposition to learning the national language.*

*H3.2 Immigration is viewed positively by regional parties if immigrants make efforts to learn the regional minority language; and negatively if immigrants speak/adopt the majority language of the state, rather than the minority language of the substate region/nation.*

*[B] 4. Party Ideology*

A fourth factor determining a statewide or regional party's stance on immigration is its ideological profile. Some scholars have argued that left-wing parties favour more pro-immigrant multicultural stances while right-wing parties are more traditionalist and anti-immigrant (Jupp 2003; Lahav 2004), which is just as relevant for statewide as regional parties. Of course, as shown above, immigration rarely maps neatly onto parties' ideological profiles (Odmalm, 2012). Often parties themselves are split on the issue of immigration (Zaslove, 2004). However, we will still put this forward as a possible hypothesis to be tested in the case of both statewide and regional parties:

*H4.1 Immigration is viewed positively by (centre-)left statewide and regional parties*

*H4.2 Immigration is viewed negatively by (centre-)right statewide and regional parties*

## *[B] 5. Electoral System*

A fifth factor that may influence the positioning of statewide and regional parties on immigration is the structure of the electoral system. Studies have shown that majoritarian or ‘first past the post’ systems tend to punish extreme policy positions, as they are usually based on competition between two dominant parties, with the creation of single-party governments that have a majority in parliament (see Odmalm, 2012). In this scenario, we would expect to see that majoritarian systems produce a dynamic of party competition that converges on a moderately pro-immigrant position. In contrast, electoral systems based on proportional representation encourage a wider variety of policy positions, including more extreme positions, with the resultant creation of coalition governments. In this scenario, proportional systems may increase polarization between parties, thereby encouraging parties to adopt more anti-immigrant positions. These hypotheses apply to both regional and statewide parties:

*H5.1 Immigration is viewed more positively by statewide and regional parties in majoritarian electoral systems that discourage polarization*

*H5.1 Immigration is viewed more negatively by statewide and regional parties in proportional or mixed-member electoral systems that encourage polarization*

## *[B] 6. Party Polarization*

It is also worthwhile separating out party polarization as an additional explanatory factor, as polarization is influenced not only by the electoral system, but also by the types of parties competing. In particular, the existence of electorally relevant anti-

immigrant parties – which have appeared in all types of electoral system – may increase polarization and push other parties to a more anti-immigrant position (Dahlstrom and Sundell, 2012). Even in cases where anti-immigrant parties do not compete, if there is a high degree of polarization, i.e. parties taking extreme opposite views on the issue, this may create a negative climate on immigration. Finally, the existence and position of stateless nationalist and regionalist parties on immigration may also influence party competition. If SNRPs adopt a negative attitude towards immigration, this may have a ‘contagion’ effect on regional branches of statewide parties; however, in cases where SNRPs adopt a positive position on immigration, this may encourage regional branches to adopt more liberal stances on immigration. So:

*H6.1 Immigration is viewed positively by statewide and regional parties if there are low levels of party polarization on immigration (in particular, if there is no electorally successful anti-immigrant party competing in the party system); and negatively if there are high levels of party polarization on immigration (in particular, if there is an electorally successful anti-immigrant party competing in the party system)*

*H6.2 Immigration is viewed positively by regional parties if the predominant SNRP is in favour of immigration; and negatively if the predominant SNRP opposes immigration, resulting in a contagion effect.*

#### *[B] 7. Policy Control over Immigration*

Our final factor explaining why regional parties may adopt diverging positions on immigration compared to statewide parties is the extent to which immigration has

been decentralized in multilevel states. This is not an issue in unitary states. In cases where a region has no competence or control over the levers of immigration there is often demand for more powers in this area, at least in the area of immigrant integration, which affects other regional competences such as health, education, housing. In such cases, regional parties may unite in calls for more powers over immigration, reducing polarization on the issue, and acting as a 'territorial bloc' in opposition to statewide parties. However, in cases where a region has a high degree of control over immigration, such as determining a regional points system, then there may be more contestation over how to manage the details of the policy controlled by the regional government, resulting in more polarization on immigration. In short, regions lacking immigration powers may experience low contestation/polarization on immigration, while regions with maximum control over immigration may experience high contestation/polarization. This leads us to hypothesize that:

*H7.1 Immigration is viewed positively by regional political parties if the region has limited control over immigration policy, resulting in low levels of contestation and polarization on immigration policy*

*H7.2 Immigration is viewed negatively by regional parties if the region has extensive control over immigration policy, leading to high levels of contestation and polarization on immigration policy*

## **[A] Conclusion**

The decentralization and federalization of states has created or strengthened regional party systems in which regional political parties may adopt distinctive positions on



policy issues that ‘break’ from the national party line. The issue of immigration is no exception. Despite being a policy traditionally controlled by the central-state government, the impact of immigration on areas of regional competences – such as the delivery of public services, economic development and social cohesion – as well as the decentralization of policy competences in the sphere of migrant integration – has encouraged regional political parties to adopt stances on immigration based on the needs and interests of the regional citizenry, society and economy that diverge from the positions of statewide parties. In particular, the existence of a ‘territorial cleavage’ based on political, economic and cultural territorial interests (such as demands for self-determination and protection of minority languages) intersects with immigration in particular ways at the substate level. This leads to the possibility of quite diverse stances of regional parties on immigration compared to national statewide parties.

This is especially true if there is an electorally successful stateless nationalist or regional party (SNRP) operating in the substate territory. The SNRPs party family, given its focus on the preservation of regional cultures, languages and economies, has an important stake in determining who is considered part of the region or nation. Although the focus in the literature has overwhelmingly been on radical-right responses to immigration (parties which focus mainly on the threats to national-state identities), it is no less important to stateless nationalist regionalist parties, which seek to build their own nations and protect regional cultures and identities.

In some cases, immigration may be viewed as a threat to the culture, identity and language of the substate region/nation in question. However, in others, SNRPs may view immigration as a positive development that increases the ranks and clout of the substate region/nation. As such, there is no direct correlation between nationalism/regionalism and immigration. SNRPs have adopted a variety of

approaches on immigration, ranging from outright xenophobic and anti-immigrant stances, to valorizing immigrant-origin groups as an important resource for the stateless nation or region. SNRPs do, however, tend to have a clear effect on the positions of their competitors: regional branches of statewide parties. In similarity to anti-immigrant parties, the stances of SNRPs on immigration (as well as territory – that is, demands for self-determination) may have a ‘contagious’ effect on other parties. So if a SNRP adopts a positive position on immigration based on the territorial needs of the region/nation, this may colour the views of other parties to adopt positive approaches. Contrarily, if a SNRP adopts a negative position, they, like the anti-immigrant parties themselves, may encourage other parties to become restrictive.

As the dynamics of regional party systems often differ from the dynamics of statewide party systems, there is a need to explore how immigration is viewed by parties at both levels, in particular the under-researched regional level, and how party stances at both levels might diverge and intersect. This chapter has sought to address this need, by developing a general explanatory framework for regional and statewide party positioning on immigration. In particular, it has developed several hypotheses to account for party competition in multilevel states, drawing on socioeconomic, cultural and political determinants. These hypotheses will be used to form the basis for the empirical chapters in Part III of the book. Contributors to the Political Parties section have been encouraged to draw selectively on the hypotheses presented above in their own cases. But rather than requiring all authors to test all of the hypotheses in their case(s), we have invited them to engage with the hypotheses in a way that reflects the importance they attribute to different explanatory variables in their particular case(s). This will allow individual

authors to examine a particular argument or proposal in greater depth. Beyond this volume, it is also hoped that these hypotheses will prove useful for other scholars wishing to explain immigrant positions in single or comparative case studies, and will encourage future work on multilevel immigration approaches that challenge the assumption that immigration is an exclusively 'national' issue.

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